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Patience in Affliction.

A
S E R M O N,

PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF
ST. MARY, WHITECHAPEL,
On the SUNDAY following the FUNERAL of
The Rev. Robert Markham, D. D.

L A T E
RECTOR OF WHITECHAPEL,
AND CHAPLAIN TO HIS MAJESTY;

CONTAINING
A Summary of his Character.

By the Rev. EDWARD ROBSON, Curate of Whitechapel.

Printed at the Request of the Parishioners.

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PATENTS IN AUSTRIA

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EXHIBITED IN THE MUSEUM OF

ST. MARY, WHITECHAPEL

(In the Exhibition of the London Convention)

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TO THE WORTHY
THE PARISHIONERS
OF THE PARISH OF
ST. MARY, WHITECHAPEL,
AND
TO ALL WHO REVERE THE MEMORY OF
The late Rev. Dr. Markham,
THE FOLLOWING
S E R M O N,
(Not originally intended for Publication,)

IS, WITH ALL DUE DEFERENCE AND RESPECT,

HUMBLY INSCRIBED,

BY

Their sincere Friend and obedient Servant,

EDWARD ROBSON.

DR. MARKHAM was educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, where he took the Degree of MASTER of ARTS. He removed afterwards to Brazen-nose College, Oxford; was presented to the Living of Whitechapel by the last named College in the Year 1768, and died September the 25th, 1786,—aged Fifty-nine Years.

JAMES I. 4.

Let Patience have her perfect Work.

PATIENCE is that Power or Faculty within us, by the Help of which we support ourselves under Afflictions. It is a resolute and yet an humble Firmness in the Mind, which administers Strength to Sufferers; which Reflection can inspire; and which, in the Faithful, is corroborated by the Aid of the Holy Spirit, whose peculiar Name is THE COMFORTER.

As Disciples of a suffering Saviour, we have all of us peculiar Trials to undergo. No Man may expect to pass through this State of Probation without them. But as, by the Condition of our Nature, and the Will of God, we are made to resemble our Lord in Sufferings, so is it our Duty to imitate the Patience with which he endured them

them. Our Rank and Character as Christians is then most exalted, when we most resemble, in the varied Circumstances of our Being, the perfect Model which the Life and Conduct of JESUS CHRIST afforded us. The whole of our blessed Master's Life on Earth, was a Scene of Humiliation—of severe Trials—of keen Afflictions: how he supported himself, by what Measure of Resignation, by what Ardour of Devotion, by what entire Reliance on the Mercy of his heavenly Father, and meek Submission to his Will—I trust we are none of us, at this Time, to learn. Our Office, then, must be, when assailed by the Miseries incident to human-Kind—to practice what we know, and to use those Means of Support in our own Case, which we know to have been effectual in that of our Lord.

We may learn a little of the Nature and Excellence of Christian Patience, and also the true Value of an artificial Consolation which has been used where Patience was imperfectly understood, which has been substituted for it,—nay preferred to it even now, at this Day, when the sure and certain Hopes of Christianity are offered to all
Mankind,

Mankind, if we compare or contrast Patience and Philosophy one with the other. The Patience of the Christian, and the Philosophy of the Pagan or Deist, differ in this—that in the first we can recognize the Features of the meek and lowly JESUS; while the last wears the determined Front of manly Resolution, heightened with the Confidence of reasoning Pride.—The first is founded in acknowledged Weakness, and the Sufferer looks for Strength from above; the last rests on the Hardihood of natural Courage, braced up and secured from giving Way, by the Shame of Faltering, the Dread of imputed Cowardice, and a laboured Persuasion of the Nothingness of natural Evils.—The first subdues and reclaims the Feelings of Man; the last struggles to overwhelm or eradicate them.—The first is never destitute of Hope; the last contends nobly against Despondency.—The first commands our Love and Pity as well as our Admiration; the last fills us with Anxiety and a Degree of Horror at the same Time that we admire.—The first is the Act of a Man; the last of one who would be something more—a Hero.—The former is therefore most fitted for *general* Consolation; while but *few* can experience that
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of the latter. We are all of us *Men*, my Brethren, but few of us can aspire to the lofty Character of *heroic Philosophers*: and thus is Christian Patience adapted to the Minds, Faculties, and Feelings of all, while Philosophy can prove an Aid but to a few.—*Let Patience*, therefore, the Patience exemplified in CHRIST JESUS, amidst all the Trials and Troubles of this miserable World, *have her perfect Work, that, as Disciples becoming your Lord, ye may be perfect and entire, wanting Nothing.*

And why should it not?—we know that Chance has no Sway in the World: we know that whatsoever befalls us, is under the Controul and Guidance, not of blind Fortune, but of ALMIGHTY GOD: we are persuaded that his Mercy is as boundless as his Power is great; and that all Things happening to us are sent to work some special Purpose in or towards us:—to humble our Pride—to try our Faith—to purify our Minds—to wean us from worldly Vanities, and to cause us to turn unto our God. The Chastisements of Providence are the Stripes of a Father, who doth not willingly

willingly afflict his Sons, but *corrects them for their Profit, and that they may be partakers of his Holiness.*

Poverty, Sickness, the Loss of Relations, Benefactors, and Friends;—these are the most usual Afflictions which befall us, which ofteneft put our Patience to the Proof:—and why should it not have its perfect Work?

I. Poverty administers a Cup of bitter Ingredients to our Lips;—but though a bitter, it is also a wholesome one. The intoxicating Draughts which continued Affluence presents to us, seldom fail to endanger our spiritual Welfare. While every Wish is gratified as easily as the Inclination is formed;—while the Pleasures of this World are ready to attend the Call of our Desires,—how shall it be, but that the Ideas of another World, and of a Being greater than ourselves, are neither so present to our Recollection, nor so perfectly formed, as to have that Influence upon our Minds which they ought to have, and which are so vastly conducive to our trueft well-being—our everlasting Happiness. But when those attractive Gratifications, which seduce the Attention of the Soul from

Objects worthy of it, are diminished in Number, their Splendour lessened or wholly obliterated, then, our Minds no longer enslaved to our Senses, rise superior to them and to the World; our Hearts are no longer set in us to do Evil, to devise Pleasures, to work Wickedness; and our Thoughts, without Distraction, wing their Way from Earth even to Heaven, and have Communion with that Being which taught us to think, which imparted to us a Portion of his own Spirit, when *he breathed into our Nostrils the Breath of Life, and Man became a living-Soul.* If Poverty thus purifies the Mind—then ought Patience to endure it. Our Lord was poor—became poor for our Sake: His Apostles were not of the Number of the rich, and they were not ashamed: they were rich in Faith, rich in good Works. *Silver and Gold I have none,* said St. Peter to the lame Man who was laid at the beautiful Gate of the Temple, *Silver and Gold I have none, but such as I have give I unto thee, in the Name of JESUS CHRIST OF NAZARETH, rise up and walk.*

Poverty may be borne; and there is a Dignity in Poverty truly and becomingly borne, which no
Wealth

Wealth can confer. The Dignity of Wealth belongs to its Trappings and Accoutrements—the Dignity of Poverty is entirely a Man's own. Let us not be ashamed, neither let us immoderately repine, if we fall from Affluence, yea from Competency—so it be not by Riot or unworthy Means—but, let Patience have her perfect Work.

II. Sickness, another Temptation or Trial to which we are exposed, likewise recommends itself to our Patience, by the good Consequences of which it is productive. It softens the Mind; and teaches us experimentally the Weakness of our Nature, and the poor Relief which this World can afford us, when we most need its Assistance. When the Hand of God, in the Visitation of Sickness, is upon us—he himself preaches to us—his Finger points to Death, which was brought into the World by Sin, and he shews us Repentance as the Means of escaping what is worse than Death—the Fire of eternal Judgment! and *the Worm that dieth not*.

We pray in our Litany for Deliverance from *sudden Death*, and wisely;—a protracted Dissolution, though it calls for all our Fortitude, yet it

makes us more fit to die. Sickness lowers all the Violences of our Nature. It moderates our Re-
sentments; it mollifies and melliorates our Tem-
pers; it withdraws us from the World; brings us
acquainted with ourselves and with our God, and
leads us into the Way of Peace.

Are these the Fruits of Sickness? *Let Patience*,
when it overtakes us, *have her perfect Work*. It is
a gracious Providence of ALMIGHTY GOD,
that, generally speaking, Sickness precedes the
Close of human Life. While the Body decays,
the Soul improves: While Disease ravages every
Fibre of our Frame, and Corruption invades it,
the Soul grows purer and purer; and when its
final Separation from the Body takes Place, is
prepared, through the Mercy of HIM who died
for it, to enter upon that blissful State, where
Want, Sickness, and Sorrow, never more can af-
flict it.

III. The Death of Relations, Benefactors, and
Friends:—this also is a sore Affliction. But even
here, where the tenderest Ties, the Ties that link
Soul to Soul may be rent in twain,—*Patience*
must

must have her perfect Work. Those for whose Departure out of the World we can feel Regret, can only be the worthy—can only be the innocent—can only be the good. The wicked we may pity, but we can only mourn for the righteous. Let us pause for a Moment; let us consider the Matter, and analyze our Grief. Do we mourn for *their* Sake? Nay, but they are most happy. They have finished their Christian Course, they have closed their Warfare against Sin, they are gone to receive a Crown of Glory at the Hand of their approving Lord. Do we mourn for *their* Sake?—Nay, *let Patience have her perfect Work*: Let Patience wipe away the Tear which Melancholy has made to fall down our Cheek. Do we grieve for our own Sake? Let us not be *selfish* in our Sorrows! To be with Christ is better than to remain in this World; and why should we wish to restrain, to keep back from his Presence, those who are prepared to enter into it, merely because they are well pleasing to ourselves?

Here we have no continuing City: We are Strangers and Pilgrims travelling through human Life. If in our journeying we have been blessed with

with those who have cheered us in the Way, who have borne a Part of our Burthen, have relieved our Fatigues, have pointed out to us the Road we are to pursue, and warned us of the Dangers in it, have led us to refreshing Shades, and given us to drink of the Waters of Comfort,—why should we delay their firmer Steps and better Speed? Why should our Infirmities impede their Happiness? Those that are entering into the Kingdom of Heaven let us suffer to go in:—The LORD gave us their friendly Aid, the LORD hath taken it away, and blessed, for that kind Help which he hath vouchsafed, be the Name of the Lord. To mourn for *their* Sake is unfitting, to grieve for *our own*, unreasonable.

Yet, still, Sorrow will have its Course; and though Reason forbids us to grieve, still Affection extorts our Sigh. Patience however does not imply an extinction of the Feelings; it is not at all inconsistent or incompatible with a moderate Degree of Grief; and its *Work* may then be called *perfect*, when by a proper Reflection upon the Virtues of them whose Loss we lament, we learn to emulate them. This is not the Stupor or the Frenzy

Frenzy of extravagant Regret,—but the improving and exalting Operation, the perfect Work of Patience.

That the heavy Loss which we have so lately sustained—I trust not without Patience—may have this happy Influence upon our Lives, Principles, and Manners, let us try to recollect the Character of our deceased Pastor and Friend; and while we deplore the Departure of so much Goodness out of the World, let us endeavour to exemplify the excellent Qualities which composed that Character in our own. * *Thus though dead shall he yet speak*,—yet persuade us to an holy and an harmless Life.

BENEVOLENCE, was, I think, the Basis of his Character. Never Man studied the Happiness of his

* 11. Heb. 4. From these Words Dr. MARKHAM preached a Funeral Sermon, September the 13th, Twelve Days before his own Death, at the Burial of that great and good Man, JONAS HANWAY, Esq. in the Church of Hanwell, before a most respectable Audience, Members of the Marine Society and Friends of the deceased.

his Fellow-Christians more, never Man laboured more to promote it. Public Charities, and private Miseries, found in him a liberal Support and ready Relief. I see many, very many now before me, whose grateful Tongues can bear Testimony to what I say, who have tasted of his Bounty, and who have heard him wish that the Quantity of his Alms had been even doubled; thus enhancing the Value of a beneficent Action by the Manner of doing it. But the Benevolence of his Disposition was sublimed into Christian Charity. He thought no Evil of any one, neither of any did he speak Evil. He knew how to forgive Injuries, and did forgive them. Perhaps it has been the Lot of few Men to reckon so small a Number of Enemies as he did, if indeed he could reckon any. None could maltreat him save the brutal and the envious, but there was a Lenity, a Forgivingness about him, which obviated and overcame even Brutality and Envy. For ever averse from Strife, and studious of avoiding Contention, Wrath and Resentment gave way before his Face—he was indeed a Peacemaker, and blessed are such. The Disputes which molest half the World, created no Disquiet in his Breast. His was a tolerant Spirit. He could be steady.

steady in his own Opinions, without hating those who dissented from him. His Principles in religious Matters, were strictly those of the Church of England. He did not live upon the Revenues of a Church whose Tenets he could not approve of, or acquiesce in; but while he abhorred this base temporizing Practice, he knew how to give their due Share of Honour to those who have given up their ecclesiastical Incomes that they may enjoy *Liberty with Peace* of Conscience.

But one Controversy have I ever heard that he had, and that was in Defence of the Doctrine of the HOLY TRINITY, and the Deity of HIM WHO IN THE BEGINNING WAS WITH GOD AND WAS GOD.

His Love for his Parish was boundless. He lived among you—and like a faithful Servant and observant Follower of CHRIST JESUS, he went about doing good. His Life was irreproachable as his Doctrine was sound. He kept back nothing. He preached the Gospel whole and entire. He extolled not Faith without Works, neither did he recommend Works without Faith. He flattered

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neither the Sinner nor the Saint. But resting Salvation upon these two Pillars, Faith and Morality conjoined, he knew that his Doctrine was impregnable, and urged it with that Earnestness which a Man always will do, when he knows that Truth and he contend on one and the same Side. In the little parochial Disputes, which now and then even the best meaning Men may fall into, he was always a Moderator; the real Interest of the Parish was continually his Object, and he was always happy when he could select the adviseable Measures of both Parties, and by combining them, gratify both by the Adoption of at least the wisest Part of their Plans, and thus render both of Utility to the Parish at large. Every one's Interest he consulted, save his own. He was contented to receive his own rightful Dues, as the Law of the Land and the Usage of his Predecessors had settled them, and to hand them down, uninjured by Fraud or Violence, to his Successors.

A true Son, and faithful Minister of the Church of England as he was, he was loyal to the Head of the Church under CHRIST. The King had not a more dutiful or more affectionate Subject, nor the
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Constitution a Friend who revered it more. He was no more a Favourer of Republicanism, than he was an Apologist for absolute Monarchy. He disdained to court noisy Popularity by affecting Republican Principles, and revered too much the Rights of Mankind, to be an Advocate for Despotism. He was satisfied with being a zealous and sincere Lover of his Country's Form of Government—which is the happy mean between a Commonwealth, and an uncontrouled Monarchy.

He was a Friend to the Poor, a Friend to Mankind, a sincere Friend to the Church of England, a zealous Pastor of this his numerous Flock, a loyal Subject to his Sovereign, and a real Lover of his Country. These are the great Lines in his Character; and *indeed* I have not trenched upon Panegyric in all I have said. I have only spoken the Truth. The more minute Parts are just as amiable. As a Companion his Manners were bland and easy, yet pure and unaffected. There was nothing of Moroseness, nothing of Darkeness in him. Cheerful as a good and benevolent Mind could make him, he carried his Heart in his Hand. He was the Delight of many; the Comforter of

many. Polite and affable, he never wounded the Feelings of any one, he never said cruel, or shocking, or unpleasantly blunt Things. He was an Ornament to our common Christianity, truly adorning the Religion which he professed.

He was a kind and an affectionate Husband; and consulted the Ease, Comfort, and Happiness, of her who with us mourns for him, in every thing.

He was a considerate and a mild Master of a Family, attentive to the Circumstances of his Servants, imposing light Services, and even in these easily satisfied.

No Man ever made a better Use of the Health and Spirits with which God long blessed him; they were employed in Glory to God, in promoting Peace on Earth, and preserving Good Will amongst Men. And when Sickneſs overtook him—the Words of the Text were continually in his Mouth:—*Let Patience have her perfect Work.* His Patience was *perfect and entire*. He submitted to every Expedient which friendly, rational, and experienced

perienced Medical Skill could devise; submitted even when the cold Hand of Death was already upon him, and Medicine could only palliate, not remove his Disorder. I myself was an Eye Witness to his last Moments. I myself heard his last Sigh. His Death was that which we might expect in so good, so gentle, so pious a Man. He took leave of his Attendants with a Blessing. He felt no Pangs of Body, he had no Perturbations of Mind. *May we die the Death of the Righteous, and may our last End be like his!*

To have lost such a Friend as this was—is indeed a severe Test for our Patience. But whilst we revere his Memory, whilst Recollection dwells delighted upon the Graces of his Character, let us endeavour to propagate his Virtues in our own Lives. Let us raise them from the Dust, and keep them alive for the Honour of human Nature, and for the Honour of our dear Redeemer Jesus Christ.

Finally, whatsoever God shall be pleased to lay upon us, let us bear it with a patient Resignation to his Will, and let us improve it to the effectuating

ating of those good Purposes for which he sends it. Let us say with the resigned and venerable Eli—*It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.*

When Afflictions press hard upon us, and we are ready to faint under their Weight—we know to whom we may apply for Relief—even to HIM who said—*come unto me all ye that travel and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.* His Ears are for ever open to the Prayers of his suffering Servants; he daily maketh Intercession for them; and at the last receiveth them unto himself. That we may find Grace to help in Time of Need,—that our Patience may be entire,—that the Trials of it may not be too severe, and yet productive of eternal Advantages to us,—that Christ may be induced to hear, to help us, and to recompence all our Sufferings, may GOD grant for the Sake of the same JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD:

To whom with the FATHER and the HOLY SPIRIT, the ever blessed and adorable TRINITY, be ascribed all Honour and Glory, now, and for evermore. Amen.

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